

## HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 900

By Cooper B

A RESOLUTION to commend Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks or his honorable and astute service to the people of Tennessee as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should pause to specially recognize those estimable public servants who have dedicated themselves to advancing the cause of civil rights and improving the quality of life for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks is one such estimable person who has served with great distinction as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum for a number of years; and

WHEREAS, an icon of the civil rights movement, Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks is a dedicated and visionary leader whose years of tireless effort to enact social change are truly inspirational and legendary; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hooks's most recent accomplishment is his instrumental role in the Memorandum of Understanding reached between the State of Tennessee and the National Civil Rights Museum; and

WHEREAS, after much discussion and deliberation, the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum in Memphis, the community of Memphis and Shelby County, and the State of Tennessee agreed on December 7, 2007, on a number of objectives to enhance and improve the operations, management, and administration of the National Civil Rights Museum and provide for a greater awareness of the purpose, activities, and substantive programs of the Museum; and

WHEREAS, to aid in the discussions with the State, the Museum Board of Directors relied upon the experience and expertise of several key Memphians, as well as the entire community of Memphis, to develop a Memorandum of Understanding that encompassed both the needs of the community and the goals of the Museum; and

WHEREAS, throughout the negotiations between the State, the Museum, and the community, Dr. Hooks proved a capable and conscientious leader, reflecting the skills and talents he has honed throughout his long and distinguished career; and

WHEREAS, born in Memphis on January 31, 1925, Benjamin Hooks received his undergraduate degree from LeMoyne College and earned his J.D. degree from DePaul University Law School in 1948; and

WHEREAS, upon his return to Memphis, Dr. Hooks worked as a lawyer before becoming ordained as a Baptist minister in 1956; and

WHEREAS, after establishing his own law firm, Dr. Hooks fought to break down segregation, and, in 1965, he became the first African-American criminal court judge in Tennessee since Reconstruction; and

WHEREAS, in 1972, Dr. Benjamin Hooks became the first African-American member of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC); during his tenure, the FCC worked to diminish employment discrimination and to increase minority ownership of television and radio stations; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, Dr. Hooks was named Executive Director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), a post he held until 1993; he is widely recognized for elevating the NAACP's position on such issues as the environment, national health, and the criminal justice system; and

WHEREAS, for his outstanding achievements, Dr. Hooks was awarded the Spingarn Medal in 1986, the NAACP's highest honor; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Hooks has also served as the Chairman of the Leadership Council on Civil Rights, Chairman of the Tennessee Human Rights Commission, and as special advisor to the NAACP on voting rights issues; and

WHEREAS, a Distinguished Professor of Political Science and History at the University of Memphis, Dr. Hooks provides active guidance to the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change, a public policy research center working to advance the understanding of the legacy of the American civil rights movement; and

WHEREAS, throughout his exemplary tenure as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum, Dr. Hooks has distinguished himself as a public-spirited citizen of the highest order and as an exceptional asset to his community; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Benjamin Hooks is a renowned champion of equality, opportunity, and justice who is wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and he should be specially recognized for his outstanding public service as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING, that we hereby commend Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks for his honorable and astute service to the good people of Tennessee as the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the National Civil Rights Museum, commend him upon his leadership in brokering the Memorandum of Understanding between the State of Tennessee, the Tennessee State Museum, and the National Civil Rights Museum, and salute his unswerving commitment to living the examined life with courage and conviction.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.